



# **Bird Talk: What Birds Are Saying and Why**

*Lita Judge*

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## **Bird Talk: What Birds Are Saying and Why** Lita Judge

A gorgeously illustrated tribute to birds of all kinds and the fantastic, funny, fascinating things that they do.

Birds have lots of ways of communicating: They sing and talk, dance and drum, cuddle and fight. But what does all of the bird talk mean?

Filled with gorgeous illustrations, this fascinating picture book takes a look at the secret life of birds in a child-friendly format that is sure to appeal to readers of all ages - whether they're die-hard bird-watchers or just curious about the creatures in their own backyards.

## **Bird Talk: What Birds Are Saying and Why Details**

Date : Published March 13th 2012 by Flash Point

ISBN : 9781596436466

Author : Lita Judge

Format : Hardcover 48 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Childrens, Picture Books, Animals, Birds, Science, Environment, Nature



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# **From Reader Review Bird Talk: What Birds Are Saying and Why for online ebook**

## **Barbara says**

Filled with large illustrations placed against generous white space, this picture book introduces the aviary world to young readers along with several textual samples of bird sounds. The author explains how those chirps and screeches uttered by birds mean something and are the birds' way of communication with one another. Thus, the "wahr...wahr..wahr" made by a male Blue Bird of Paradise and his upside down hanging from a perch are intended to ward off intruders and entice a mate. As usual, Judge's painstaking attention to detail in her illustrations insures that readers will make note of the characteristics of her subject; thus, she portrays the rich hues of birds' feathers, the color of an egg, the declaration of war on a marauder intent on snitching an egg. Large font is used throughout the pages to introduce the birds' messages sent when they're intent on hiding or aware that they are under attack. Back matter includes thumbnail sketches offering more information, including range and habitat, of the birds that appear in the book. There is also a glossary and an Author's Note that describes Judge's early fascination with bird talk. All in all, this is a worthy addition to the classroom library. It feels as though readers are eavesdropping on their feathered friends, thanks to Judge's interpretations.

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## **Gema Ramirez says**

Bird Talk, What Birds are Saying and Why by Lita Judge is a great nonfiction book for children, with beautiful illustrations of different bird species. One of the best things about this book is that Judge hits all the topics of how and why exactly birds talk to each other. For instance, selecting a mate to territorial threats, greetings, training their young to be on their own, and all the way to tricking and mimicking other bird calls.

Judge also uses a wide range of scientific terms in this book that is explained by the glossary in the back of the book. I had no idea that the term roost is a verb that means "to sit or rest on a perch, especially for the night." I totally get where the bird, rooster, got its name! Bottom line, this was a very informative, nonfiction book that I enjoyed reading. The illustrations, the glossary of birds in the back, and the terms are all useful tools for children when reading this book, as well as for adults too!

I decided to pair this book with Cuckoo by Fiona Robertson (2012) for my twin text. This book shares the story of a bird named, Cuckoo, who is born in the wrong nest. Cuckoo goes in search of somebody who will understand him but quickly discovers that he is quite different from frogs, sheep, pigs, cows, snakes, and rabbits.

These two books share a similar characteristic: communication. In Lita Judge's book Bird Talk, What Birds are Saying and Why, she describes all the different types of communication that birds demonstrate. She explains that different birds do different things in order to communicate with others. In Cuckoo, the bird tried so hard to communicate with others by trying to imitate them, but couldn't measure up to it. He demonstrated characteristics of the Scarlet Macaw, who learn to mimic other bird calls, from Bird Talk, What Birds are Saying and Why. Overall, both books were entertaining, yet insightful too.

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## **Betsy says**

The older you get the more facts seem to change. For example, when I was a kid I remember that some facts were as of yet unprovable but were told with a certain ring of truth. Take the dinosaurs as an example. As a kid I "knew" that they had all died out probably because of a big nasty meteor. Talk to a kid today and ask them what killed the dinosaurs and you will receive a very different interpretation. The dinos? Why didn't you know? They all turned into birds! Which is to say, there's a working theory at the moment that says that the dinos evolved into the birdies we know and love today. With that new theory in mind I can think of few author/illustrators better equipped to write a factual illustrated bird picture book than Ms. Lita Judge. Having wowed the masses already with her fantastic *Born to Be Giants: How Baby Dinosaurs Grew to Rule the World* it seems only appropriate that she should turn her sights on the next stage in evolution: those with some avian flair.

How much do you really know about birds? They're our neighbors, after all. Even if you live in the most bustling of metropolises, you're bound to catch a glimpse of them here or there. Yet are they the brainless twittering nobodies we sometimes take them to be or is there something else at work? Are they, in fact, capable of communication? Turning her attention to twenty-eight different kinds of birds, Ms. Judge separates her book into the ways birds choose to stand out amongst one another, how they greet each other, how they find one another, how they protect one another, encourage each other, listen, and learn. Accompanied by Ms. Judge's gorgeous lush watercolors, kids get short sweet glimpses into the lives of birds, common and otherwise. Back matter includes a listing of the birds in this book (with additional information about their habitats and geographical locations), a Glossary, References, a Web Site, and an Author's Note that explains how Ms. Judge came to write her book.

How does nonfiction get used by kids on a day-to-day basis? Basically it splits into two segments. Either they pick up a nonfiction tome for a class assignment or they do it out of love for the subject. And because there are as many distinct individual obsessions as there are fishies in the sea, no matter what the subject matter is you can count on some kid somewhere loving that topic to death (example: When I was a kid I wanted to know everything there was to know about albino animals... of which there was nada). Birds seem like a pretty straightforward choice, though. Usually a kid will obsess over a particular type of bird, rather than the species a whole, but I'm confident that if talked up correctly this book could prove as popular with the penguin and macaw fans out there as it is with kids assigned the standard "animal book" requirement in school.

Because when it comes down to it the book is a nice display of contrasts. Does any species have as many stunning examples of sheer variety as those in the world of birds? In a book like this it's as important to make sure that the book is designed well as it is written and illustrated with truth and beauty. Judge's title makes clever use of white space breaking up each page with a mix of size and shape. She must have planned the book out meticulously to know how to pair the long lengthy neck of the flamingo's head and legs alongside the spiky head of the squat Common Merganser. The result is a book that feels as meticulously planned out as a graphic novel in terms of borders, action, image, and text.

Criticisms of the book I've heard haven't made much of an impression on me but I figure I should make note of them just the same. One librarian I showed the book to felt vaguely unimpressed. To her mind the book isn't doing anything particularly new or original. I'll agree that we have a nice plethora of bird books in our science sections of the library, but even then Judge's take stands out. Choosing to include watercolors rather than photographs gives the birds a friendly air without anthropomorphizing them. Breaking up the text also makes the book infinitely approachable and doesn't intimidate the reluctant readers of the world. The topic of

animal communication is out there, but birds specifically? Not so much on the children's side of things. Personally, I would have liked to have seen some recommended reading titles at the end that were particularly kid-friendly. Judge's list of resources do show that she's done her research but some kid-friendly additions, particularly websites, would have been welcome.

Like a written companion to the documentary *Winged Migration* Judge's title takes the wide swath of ornithology as a whole and breaks it down into small bite-sized pieces that kids can both read and enjoy. Lovely as a document, useful as a book, and a definite boon to the bird-lovers amongst us, count on *Bird Talk* to encourage just that. A whole lotta talking about birds.

For ages 6-10

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### **Whole And says**

A simple yet great exploration of bird communication and details of their geographical habitats and range. Excellent for the growing bird lover written by someone who grew with ornithologist grandparents! A delightful way to engage young minds with the fascinating world of bird speak.

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### **Carol says**

Written by the granddaughter of ornithologists, this book is a great introduction to how birds communicate with each other. I will make the small disclaimer that I'm a huge bird-nerd though so there aren't many bird books that I don't love.

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### **Melissa Stewart says**

Looking for a fun way to teach animal adaptations? This book is perfect. It describes how a wide variety of birds use their voices and body language to attract mates, stay in touch with their young, avoid enemies, and more. BIRD TALK belongs in every elementary classroom and on the bookshelves of bird lovers young and old.

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### **Scope says**

You have your nonfiction that clearly covers the basics – here's an animal, here's where it lives, here's what it eats – and then you have books like *Bird Talk*, where every page brings something unexpected. Richly illustrated and keenly researched, Lita Judge's ode to ornithological communication makes a nice counterpoint to the more workmanlike nonfiction staples.

Tweet, chirp, caw, strut – when it comes to the purposes and sophistication of bird communication, there's much more than meets the eye and ear. *Bird Talk* is broken into sections to make sense of it all. From the

common American Robin singing hundreds of different songs to attract a mate to lesser known Scandinavian Fieldfares dropping poop missiles, Judge hits on a wide range of species and their lesser-known communication techniques. Back matter includes added information on every species covered in the book, a glossary, references, and a website to explore.

The detailed illustrations strike a nice balance between accuracy and character. The artwork is set against large expanses of white, allowing the text to draw the eye.

A bit of pleasure reading nonfiction for a wide audience. Bird Talk will make a lovely addition to your collection.

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### **Robin says**

A picture book where both the parent and the child can learn about birds and what their behavior is communicating. Colorful pictures and not dense or overwhelming for young readers.

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### **Rani says**

Twenty-nine birds featured in this book communicate their various needs using different sounds. The birds are from all continents and ecosystems. This is a great book for any child who likes to talk, imitate, and for a rainy day indoors. My child likes to have models to draw from. We will be using some drawings from this book. Simple text. A great book for all bird lovers!

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### **Amy says**

Written and illustrated by the grand-daughter of ornithologists, this book nicely covers a variety of birds and their modes of communication, from dances to songs to those birds that learn to mimic the sounds around them.

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### **Lindsay Weideman says**

Twin Text: Cuckoo! By Fiona Robertson

Rationale: I picked Cuckoo! By Fiona Robertson because of the connection between the bird talk in the nonfiction selection and the bird in this fiction story that is born in the wrong nest and sets off on a journey trying to find someone that will understand him/speak his language. Bird Talk: What Birds Are Saying and Why by Lita Judge describes the different kinds of bird communication. The book describes a variety of birds that some students may have never heard of before and how they communicate to one another. For example, a Blue Bird of Paradise sings to attract a mate and defend its territory. To be noticed by a female, he swings and flips upside down.

Text Structure: This book has a variety of text structures. It has an established sequence in which each

paragraph is about a different bird and its unique communication style. The name of the bird is larger than the rest of the text so it stands out. There is a lot of description and also question and answer included in the text. A glossary is included at the end of the book with all of the bird names that were discussed.

Strategy Application: I would have my students complete a webbing activity in which I would use the bird from Cuckoo! By Fiona Robertson and then research all of the different kinds of communication styles that it uses (using the nonfiction book as a reference).

Book Review Citation for Nonfiction Book:

(2012, February 1) School Library Journal. <http://www.booksinprint2.com.leo.lib....#>

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## **Jenny says**

An engaging look at different methods birds use to communicate. It discusses ways birds find a mate, claim their territory, protect themselves and other reasons they communicate. It features a purpose of communication on a double page spread and then on the next double page spread it highlights three birds that communicate in that way. I love the illustrations.

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## **Jim Erikson says**

Communication is a nice slice through a wide, wide topic. This was a good choice. I almost think Judge could have focused on one bird and gone for depth?--maybe she'll do a follow-up.

I noticed Judge did an interesting suspense thing early in the book, where she gave a teaser on one spread and then delivered on it at the page turn. But then this disappeared later in the book as it got more cramped with content.

I think I may have a hard time with the informational book review, because the approach seemed so basic. There is so much I've heard about bird communication research over the past ten years that I'm disappointed as a reader not to see it. So is the age orientation of informational text always going to get in the way of my aesthetic experience as an adult? I haven't needed to pretend to be a child, or project my experience onto children with story or poetry picturebooks thus far. If I have to do so with informational text, it's an indictment of the genre (or is it of me?).

I enjoyed the author note at the end. It qualified her not through her own science credentials, but because she grew up around ornithologists--both grandparents! Life experience and depth worked well for me. I also just enjoyed quickly reading each bird's techniques--while it was basic, I didn't already know the information for every bird.

Sources? None given. It could have been the Cornell ornithology lab with all its sound file--give us something!

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## **Joanne Roberts says**

Really lovely illustrations showcase various birds and their forms of communication. Organized by purpose, the text is easy for kids to understand and relate to (yes relate to!) Introduces unusual birds and their unusual behaviors.

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## **Tasha says**

Incredible displays of feathers, bright-colors and complex songs are all ways that birds communicate and try to find a mate. Some birds puff and strut, others have large wattles, and still others drum on a branch with a stick. Once birds have found that mate, they communicate their pairing to others using dances, clattering bills, or by providing food for one another. When eggs and baby birds arrive, the parents use flashing wing colors, trickery or pretending to be wounded to lead predators away from their young. The parents teach their babies to eat, fly and more with clucks, demonstrations, and plenty of talk. Celebrate the birds that live around your house as well as exotic birds that have amazing ways of communicating.

Read the rest of my review on my blog, [Waking Brain Cells](#).

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